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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 BUCHAREST 000457

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SUBJECT: PSD HEAD MIRCEA GEOANA ON THE PRESIDENTIAL
SUSPENSION: "I'M NUMBER ONE IN ROMANIA TODAY"

Classified By: Ambassador Nicholas Taubman for 1.4 (b) and (d)

¶1. (C) Ambassador accompanied by Polcouns met with PSD head Mircea Geoana April 20. The meeting was at Geoana's request.

Geoana began by stating that he had tried his utmost to find an amicable solution short of suspending President Basescu. He had met with Basescu twice, and had undertaken these secret meetings at personal risk, since people in his party

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would "kill me" if they knew about the meetings. According to Geoana, the negotiations had focused on three broad themes, including an agreement from the PSD to pull back from suspending the President in exchange for the President's public apology stating that--while being well-intentioned--his actions perhaps "crossed the line"; the President would have also have had to "guarantee" that he had heard the message from Parliament and pledge to engage Parliament in a "positive" way. Geoana said there was a clearcut understanding that Parliament would continue to monitor the President's future actions closely and would not hesitate to reopen impeachment proceedings if the President crossed the line again.

¶2. (C) Geoana said that the second part of the proposed agreement had been recognition from the President that the PSD constituted the "majority" party in parliament (note: the PSD actually holds 150 out of 459 seats in Parliament, or 32 percent) and that Basescu would announce that he had agreed to letting the PSD form a new government. In exchange, Basescu would cease his call for early parliamentary elections.

¶3. (C) The final part of the package, according to Geoana, was agreement of a "Grand National Project" including an effort to revise the constitution including proceeding with plans to introduce a uninominal vote; decentralization of government functions; and an accelerated plan to invest more in highways, infrastructure, and to increase Romania's capacity to absorb EU funding. The goal, he said, was to depoliticize public administration and to turn the "negative energy" of the suspension process into something positive.

¶4. (C) Geoana claimed that Basescu had agreed to the package but had reneged after the Constitutional Court decision (e.g., which stated that Basescu had not violated the constitution). He complained that he had made an effort to strike a deal with the President when the easier course would have been to "get his ass" politically. Geoana concluded that he had done his best and his conscience was clear. Geoana added that he had strong proof that Basescu had manipulated the internal intelligence service (SRI) to get information on the judges in the Constitutional Court. This was a criminal offense. He cautioned, however, that he was

not saying that Basescu used this information, but that Basescu had asked to see it. Geoana also evinced suspicion that George Maior, Director of the domestic intelligence service (SRI), was also "involved".

15. (C) Geoana also dismissed as a "burlesque" the pro-Basescu demonstration that took place the previous evening in University Square, boasting that he could easily mobilize 60,000 PSD supporters who would outnumber any demonstration in support of Basescu. He asserted that the rally had shown Basescu was "desperate," and that he was finished politically. Geoana predicted that Basescu would use these demonstrations as a pretext not to honor his pledge to resign from office if he were suspended, noting that Basescu would likely try to organize another rally this coming Monday.

16. (C) Ambassador thanked Geoana for his information, and noted in connection with Geoana's planned visit to Washington that perception was key: we didn't want to create the impression that Washington had a hand in what had just taken place; that we were choosing sides; or that we were "anointing" any victors. Geoana replied that he well understood any "sensitivities" regarding the visit; he was "not rushing" to go to Washington; he had just wanted to have his friends and allies hear his message directly. He said that his message for Washington was that Basescu had weakened himself and no longer able to rally any political forces to his side. He added that if Basescu "came to his senses," he would have no problem with cooperating with Basescu on a "Grand National Project." He concluded--albeit with some evident disappointment--"I'll give up on the visit--I can pick up the phone and call JD and Dan Fried, any time..."

17. (C) Geoana added that he was "far stronger" an expert on foreign policy issues than anybody in the Tariceanu cabinet, and he wanted to put this expertise in service of Romania.

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Geoana also hinted obliquely that "if you feel more comfortable with a different team in the government in order to see that the transatlantic project continues" then he was ready to respond, "even if it is not in my interest." He noted that it would be far easier to "lay back with a remote control of the government as I do today". Finally, Geoana remarked that that he shouldn't be treated as the "bad boy" of Romania, adding, "I'm number one in Romania today, and I'm entitled to use my strength."

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